

# Gun Deer Hunter Questionnaire 2002

By Brian Dhuey

## **Abstract**

The 2002 gun deer season provided active hunters with over three million days of hunter recreation. Hunter's who rated the quality of their hunt as "Very High" or "Fairly High" increased to 15% in 2002 compared to 12% in 2001. Gun deer hunters averaged 5.2 days afield during the 2002 season. The majority of gun deer hunting took place on private lands (68%). The Northern Forest, Eastern Farmland, and Southern Farmland regions of the state experienced the most hunter days. Ninety-seven percent of all respondents hunted the 2002 "Regular" gun deer season. Forty-four percent of the respondents who actively hunted in 2002 killed a deer.

## **Methods**

A survey was mailed to approximately 10,000 gun deer hunters after the completion of the 2002 gun deer season. The sample was drawn from the 2002 license sales, which had gun deer authority, in proportion to license sales for each county. The questionnaire included specific questions about the days and units in which gun deer hunters hunted as well as the type of land hunted (private, public, or industrial). A second mailing of 5,000 questionnaires was sent to non-respondents. Data from all returned questionnaires were entered into the DNR UNIX production server and summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

## **Results**

Responses were received from 4,365 of 10,000 hunters surveyed. After duplicates were removed, the resulting response rate was 43%. In 2002, 97.3% of hunters who purchased a license hunted during the 9-day season (Table 1). Forty-four percent of the respondents who actively hunted killed a deer (antlered or antlerless) during the 2002 season. These numbers are similar to the 2001 season where 99.5% of the license holders hunted and 44% of those killed a deer.

Wisconsin again held an early antlerless only deer season prior to the opening of the regular gun deer season. Seventeen percent of the regular season hunters hunted in this season. Hunters were also asked if they planned on hunting any of the Chronic Wasting Disease herd reduction seasons that either proceeded/followed the regular gun deer season. Twelve percent of license holders planned on taking part in these special seasons. Most hunters (77%) said that they would shoot an antlerless deer if their unit were a special antlerless deer unit next year.

Thirteen percent of hunters surveyed anticipated hunting the 2002 muzzleloader season that immediately follows the gun deer season. This is a decrease from 2001 levels when 15% planned on hunting the muzzleloader season.

When the results of this survey were expanded to the larger population of licensed gun deer hunters, the number of active hunters in 2002 was estimated at 602,512. This is a decrease from the estimated 687,153 hunters that hunted the 2001 season. The 2002 gun deer season (Nov. 23 – Dec. 1) provided these hunters with approximately 3,010,000 days of hunting recreation. This is a decrease of about 667,000 hunter days from 2001 levels. Most of this decrease in hunter activity can be attributed to the decrease in license sales and hunter participation from the finding of CWD in Wisconsin's wild deer.

Despite the uncertainty of CWD, gun deer hunters averaged 5.2 days afield in 2002 in comparison to the 5.4 days afield in 2001. Most hunter days were spent in the Northern Forest (37%), Eastern Farmland (22%), and Southern Farmland (19%) regions of Wisconsin (Figure 1). The remaining hunter days were spent in the Western Farmland and Central Forest regions, 15% and 8% respectively. Much of this distribution is in relation to the amount of deer habitat in each region. Sixty-eight percent of hunter days were spent on private lands (Table 1). Public lands (about 20% of the State's deer range) provided approximately 632,000 hunter days of recreation (21% of hunter days). This is a decrease of about 149,000 hunter days on public land from 2001 levels. The rest of the hunter days were spent on Industrial forest, Forest Tax, or a mixture of land ownership types.

Hunters were asked how they obtained access to private land on the opening day of the gun deer season. Eighty-three percent of the respondents either owned the land themselves, hunted on land owned by a relative or family member, or hunted on a friend's or neighbor's land.

Most hunters (83%) felt the deer population was "about the same" or "went down" from last year. Hunters were asked to rate the overall quality of their 2002 gun deer season. Fifteen percent rated their hunt "Very High" or "Fairly High". Thirty-seven percent rated their hunt "About Average", while 47% rated it "Fairly Low" to "Very Low". Successful hunters rated their hunt "Very High" or "Fairly High" 25% of the time, while unsuccessful hunters rated their hunt "Very High" or "Fairly High" 8% of the time.

Hunters were asked to rate the factors having the most influence on their perception of a "quality" deer hunt. "Seeing deer" was the most important factor effecting the hunter's perception of a "quality" hunt. The second most important factor was "Spending time with friends and family". The least important factor effecting a hunter's perception of a "quality" hunt was the weather. Thirty-three percent of the hunters said they passed on shooting a "legal buck" during the season. The most common reason for passing on a buck was "Too small".

Hunters were asked what factors, if any, limited the number of antlerless deer they shot. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents said that they "did not want any more deer". The second most common factor limiting their antlerless harvest was not seeing any more deer. The least stated factor was "no place to donate the deer" and "opposed to shooting does".

Hunters were asked how the ban on baiting deer effected their hunting in 2002. Most hunters felt it had not effect (51.3%). The hunters who did say the baiting ban effected hunting, were evenly divided between "Positive" (23.5%) and "Negative" (23.5%) effects.

Most hunters did not submit their deer head for CWD testing. The ones that did predominantly used the DNR process to do so. When asked if concerns about CWD changed their hunting, most hunters said no (70.8%). The most commonly stated change because of CWD was "I only hunted for large bucks" (8.4%)

Few hunters (1%) killed a coyote during the 2002 gun deer season in the portion of the state that was open to coyote hunting during the gun deer season. The majority of hunters (65%) said that they would kill a coyote during the gun deer season if given the opportunity.

**Table 1.** *Answers to the 2002 gun deer hunter questionnaire.*

Question 1. What area(s) of the state did you do most of your gun deer hunting in? (Please check **ALL** that apply)

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Intensive Harvest Zone	288	3.0%
Management Zone	3,095	32.3%
Outstate (in the rest of the state)	6,119	63.9%
Did not hunt	82	0.9%

Question 2. What type(s) of hunting license(s) did you purchase for your own use this season? (Please check **ALL** that apply)  
(Percentages based on 4,333 questionnaire responses)

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Sports	729	16.8%
Small Game	698	16.1%
Deer	2,837	65.5%
Bear	138	3.2%
Archery	916	21.1%
Patron	859	19.8%

Question 3. What is your county of residence?

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Northern Forest	479	12.2%
Western Farmland	617	15.7%
Central Forest	242	6.2%
Eastern Farmland	1,013	25.8%
Southern Farmland	1,574	40.1%

No Answer = 410

Question 4. Did you hunt the **early** antlerless only gun deer season in Zone T Units (24-27 Oct.)?

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Yes	746	17.3%
No	3,563	82.7%

No Answer = 26

Question 5. Do you plan on hunting the **late** antlerless only gun deer season in Zone T Units (12-15 Dec.)?

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Yes	560	13.0%
No	3,734	87.0%

No Answer = 41

Question 6. Do you plan on hunting the extended seasons (Oct. 24 – Jan. 31) in the Intensive Harvest Zone? (See Map)

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Yes	164	3.8%
No	4,134	96.2%

No Answer = 37

Question 7. Do you plan on hunting the extended seasons (Nov. 23-Dec. 15 & Dec. 21-Jan. 3) in the Management Zone? (See Map)

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Yes	378	8.8%
No	3,920	91.2%

No Answer = 37

Question 8. If your unit is a special antlerless deer unit next year, would you shoot an antlerless deer?

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Yes	3,280	77.4%
No	959	22.6%

No Answer = 96

Question 9. Do you plan on hunting the 2002 muzzleloader season, which immediately follows the 2002 **"Regular"** 9-day gun deer season?

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Yes	563	13.1%
No	3,743	86.9%

No Answer = 28

Question 10. Did you hunt the “**Regular**” 9-day gun deer season of Nov. 23 –Dec. 1?

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Yes	4,205	97.3%
No	113	2.6%

No Answer = 17

Question 11. How many days did you hunt during the 2002 “**Regular**” 9-day gun deer season? (Do not include days hunted during the early antlerless only or muzzleloader seasons.) Mean days hunted = 5.2.

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
1	136	3.2%
2	534	12.7%
3	483	11.5%
4	559	13.3%
5	680	16.2%
6	525	12.5%
7	446	10.6%
8	252	6.0%
9	568	13.6%

No Answer = 22

Question 12. How many **antlerless** deer permits did you receive this season? Mean number of permits = 1.3.

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
None	995	24.2%
1	246	41.2%
2	2,035	24.4%
>2	1,811	10.2%

Question 13. How many deer did you register during the 2002 “Regular” gun deer hunting season?

Answer	Mean Registered
Antlerless	0.39
Antlered	0.31

Question 13a. If you hunted deer with a gun this past season, fill in the table below.

Write in the management unit number for each day you hunted. If you hunted in more than one unit on a given day, list only the unit in which you spent the most time. Also, please specify the type of land on which you hunted.

Regions Where Hunters Hunted (# of hunter days)						
Date 2002	Northern Forest	Western Farmland	Central Forest	Eastern Farmland	Southern Farmland	Total
Nov. 23	198,103	86,331	51,027	114,774	112,201	562,436
Nov. 24	192,386	80,613	46,882	107,913	104,626	532,420
Nov. 25	131,783	41,593	24,584	53,885	44,452	296,297
Nov. 26	109,200	34,161	18,438	47,882	36,733	246,414
Nov. 27	92,620	37,448	17,152	54,457	41,164	242,841
Nov. 28	87,903	48,597	19,439	73,324	64,891	294,154
Nov. 29	102,196	46,596	21,869	74,610	61,318	306,589
Nov. 30	93,049	51,170	22,726	73,038	69,179	309,162
Dec. 1	64,605	38,449	15,294	52,599	48,740	219,687
Total	1,071,845	464,958	237,411	652,482	583,304	3,010,000

Deer Management Unit Group	Land Type Hunters Hunted (# of hunter days)					Total
	Private	Public	Industrial	Forest Tax	Mixed	
A	29,158	33,446	715	5,574	13,150	82,043
B	61,318	46,739	4,431	6,289	19,868	138,645
C	50,884	59,317	3,002	5,860	15,580	134,643
D	114,345	60,746	7,290	8,004	24,013	214,398
E	29,873	52,027	4,431	3,573	9,862	99,766
F	58,888	44,309	5,574	6,146	21,297	136,214
G	27,729	42,880	4,431	6,146	12,149	93,335
H	62,747	67,464	2	6,718	8,147	145,078
J	183,810	32,588	0	1,572	12,292	230,262
K	567,010	47,739	2,144	5,288	30,159	652,340
L	126,066	78,469	858	6,575	25,299	237,267
M	477,249	26,585	572	4,860	14,293	523,559
N	264,424	40,021	286	858	16,151	321,740
Total	2,053,501	632,330	33,736	67,463	222,260	3,009,290

Question 14. If you hunted privately owned land on **OPENING DAY** of gun deer season, how did you obtain access to the land? (Please check ONE.)

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
I own the land.	1,026	31.6%
I lease the land.	122	3.8%
I hunted land owned by a relative or member of my family.	974	30.0%
I hunted on a friend's or neighbor's land.	707	21.8%
I obtained permission from a non-related landowner.	274	8.4%
I hunted unposted private land.	26	0.8%
Other (please describe):	116	3.6%

No Answer = 960

Question 15. In your hunting area, how have deer numbers changed from the last year? (Please check ONE)

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Deer numbers went up	322	7.8%
Deer numbers went down	1,905	45.5%
About the same	1,549	37.0%
I did not hunt the same area as last year	150	3.6%
Unsure	259	6.2%

No Answer = 20

Question 16. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your 2002 **"Regular"** 9-day gun deer hunt? (Please check ONE.)

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Very High	229	5.5%
Fairly High	415	9.9%
About Average	1,580	37.8%
Fairly Low	1,180	28.3%
Very Low	772	18.5%

No Answer = 29

Question 17. Please rate the factors that most influence your perception of a “quality” deer hunt. Enter a value of 1 to 7 next to each statement, with “1” having the most effect and “7” having the least effect on you hunting experience.

Factor influencing hunt	% That ranked it “1” (having the most influence)*	Mean value of response
An opportunity to kill a deer	25.3%	3.33
Seeing deer	41.4%	2.55
Seeing bucks	30.6%	3.08
Weather	11.6%	4.48
Not seeing other hunters	15.0%	4.26
Spending time with friends and family	44.3%	2.91
Killing a deer	17.3%	4.20

\* Many hunters rated multiple factors as having the most influence so the column total will not equal 100%.

Question 18. Did you pass on shooting a legal buck?

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Yes	1,357	32.5%
No	2,814	67.5%

No Answer = 33

Question 18a. If yes, what factors entered into your decision? (Check ALL)

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Too Small	5,133	65.0%
Deer not in a safe direction for shot	904	11.5%
Concerned over deer diseases	142	1.8%
Not allowed to by Earn-a-Buck rules	424	5.8%
Deer not positioned for sure shot	1,085	13.8%
Did not want more venison	179	2.3%
Equipment malfunction	25	0.3%



Question 19. What factors, if any, limited the number of antlerless deer you shot this fall?

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Limited by the landowner	739	4.9%
Cost of deer processing	1,070	7.1%
Not enough freezer space	718	4.8%
Did not want any more deer	4,351	29.0%
No place to donate the deer	636	4.2%
Opposed to shooting does	636	4.2%
Did not want to reduce the deer herd any more	2,122	14.1%
Not enough time to hunt	832	5.5%
Did not see any more deer	2,990	19.9%
None	924	6.2%

Question 20. How many deer do you and your immediate family eat in one year?

**Mean = 1.8**

Question 21. What effect, if any, did the ban on bait have on your hunt? (Please check **ONLY** one.)

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Positive – deer moving more naturally	924	23.5%
Neutral – little bait is used where I hunt regardless of the ban	1,580	40.2%
Neutral – area used to be baited, but didn't affect me	434	11.1%
Negative – I was not as successful as when baiting was legal	922	23.5%
No change – area still baited (illegally)	68	1.7%

Question 22. Did you submit a deer head for Chronic Wasting Disease testing?

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
No	1,566	84.2%
Yes, through the DNR sampling process	289	15.5%
Yes, through a purchased kit	4	0.2%
Yes, through a veterinarian	1	0.1%

Question 23. Did your hunting change because of concerns about Chronic Wasting Disease?  
(Please check **ALL** that apply)

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
No change	3,422	70.8%
I hunted less	252	5.2%
I only hunted for large bucks	407	8.4%
I was cautious about the deer condition before shooting	391	8.1%
I changed my location	41	0.9%
I do not plan to eat any deer I have shot	166	3.4%
I hunted more	106	2.2%
I shot more deer than normal	52	1.1%

Question 24. Did you kill a coyote in the zone open to coyote hunting during **this** gun deer season.

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Yes	41	1.0%
No	4,143	99.0%

No Answer = 21

Question 25. Did you kill a coyote in the zone open to coyote hunting during the previous five (5) gun deer seasons?

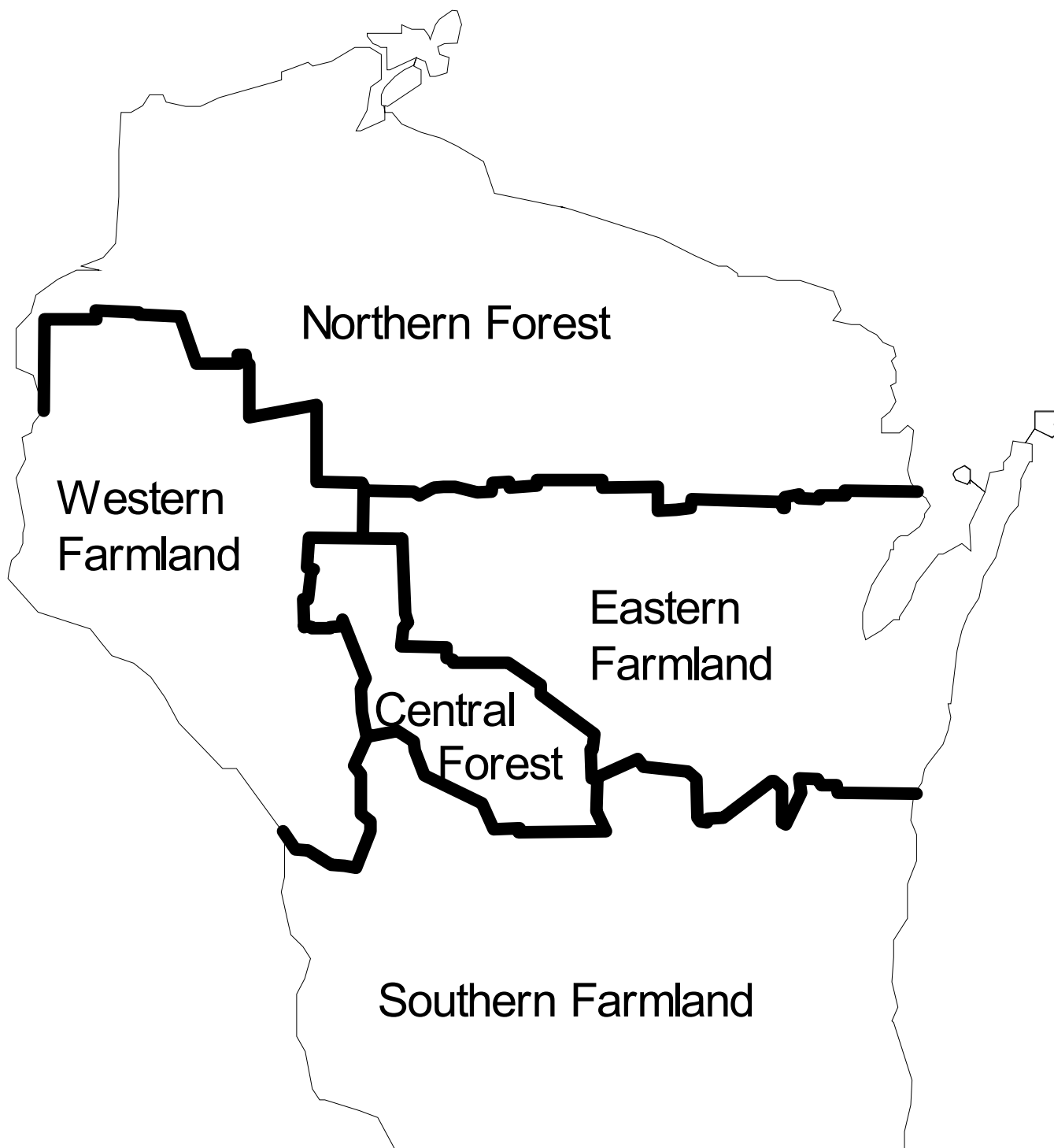
Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Yes	152	3.6%
No	4,028	96.4%

No Answer = 25

Question 26. Would you kill a coyote in a zone open to coyote hunting during the gun deer season?

Answer	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Yes	2,709	65.1%
No	1,452	34.9%

No Answer = 44



**Figure 1.** *Deer management units grouped by region.*

## 2002 Gun Deer Hunting Questionnaire

s. 23.09(2)(k), Wis. Stats.  
Form 2300-043 (R 11/02)

Dear Fellow Deer Hunter:

You have been selected as part of a sample of deer hunters to provide information on hunter distribution during the recent "Regular" gun deer season. Please answer the questions below. Completion of this survey is voluntary. To aid you in answering part of the questionnaire, refer to the map of Wisconsin's deer management units printed on the back of this questionnaire. Report on yourself only, not on your hunting party or family and only on your Wisconsin deer hunting.

We need your response no matter whether, or how much, you hunted. Reverse the flap on this questionnaire, tape the edge and mail. Using your stamp will save DNR funds for management even though no postage is required to return the questionnaire.

Your cooperation is appreciated and will help us do a better job of managing Wisconsin's deer resource.

Sincerely,

Dave Evenson  
Deer and Bear Ecologist (Acting)  
Bureau of Wildlife Management

1. What area(s) of the state did you do most of your gun deer hunting in? (Please check <b>ALL</b> that apply.) (Note: See Map) <input type="checkbox"/> Intensive Harvest Zone <input type="checkbox"/> Management Zone <input type="checkbox"/> Outstate (in the rest of the state) <input type="checkbox"/> Did not hunt	11. How many days did you hunt during the 2002 "Regular" 9-day gun deer season? (Do not include days hunted during the early antlerless only or muzzleloader seasons.) _____																																																												
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If you answered **NO**, please stop here and return the survey.

Figure 1. 2002 Gun deer hunter questionnaire.

<p>14. If you hunted privately-owned land on <b>OPENING DAY</b> of gun deer season, how did you obtain access to the land? (Please check <b>ONE</b>.)</p> <p>(1) <input type="checkbox"/> I own the land.</p> <p>(2) <input type="checkbox"/> I lease the land.</p> <p>(3) <input type="checkbox"/> I hunted land owned by a relative or member of my family.</p> <p>(4) <input type="checkbox"/> I hunted on a friend's or neighbor's land.</p> <p>(5) <input type="checkbox"/> I obtained permission from a non-related landowner.</p> <p>(6) <input type="checkbox"/> I hunted unposted private land.</p> <p>(7) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe): _____</p>	<p>19. What factors, if any, limited the number of antlerless deer you shot this fall?</p> <p>(1) <input type="checkbox"/> Limited by the landowner</p> <p>(2) <input type="checkbox"/> Cost of deer processing</p> <p>(3) <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough freezer space</p> <p>(4) <input type="checkbox"/> Did not want any more deer</p> <p>(5) <input type="checkbox"/> No place to donate the deer</p> <p>(6) <input type="checkbox"/> Opposed to shooting</p> <p>(7) <input type="checkbox"/> Did not want to reduce the deer herd anymore</p> <p>(8) <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough time to hunt</p> <p>(9) <input type="checkbox"/> Did not see any more deer</p> <p>(10) <input type="checkbox"/> None</p>
<p>15. In your hunting area, how have deer numbers changed from the last year? (Please check <b>ONE</b>.)</p> <p>(1) <input type="checkbox"/> Deer numbers went up</p> <p>(2) <input type="checkbox"/> Deer numbers went down</p> <p>(3) <input type="checkbox"/> About the same</p> <p>(4) <input type="checkbox"/> I did not hunt the same areas as last year</p> <p>(5) <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure</p>	<p>20. How many deer do you and your immediate family eat in one year?</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>16. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your 2002 "Regular" 9-day gun deer hunt? (Please check <b>ONE</b>.)</p> <p>(1) <input type="checkbox"/> Very High                      (4) <input type="checkbox"/> Fairly Low</p> <p>(2) <input type="checkbox"/> Fairly High                      (5) <input type="checkbox"/> Very Low</p> <p>(3) <input type="checkbox"/> About Average</p>	<p>21. What effect, if any, did the ban on bait have on your hunt? (Please check <b>ONLY</b> one.)</p> <p>(1) <input type="checkbox"/> Positive- deer moving more naturally</p> <p>(2) <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral - little bait is used where I hunt regardless of the ban</p> <p>(3) <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral- area used to be baited, but didn't affect me</p> <p>(4) <input type="checkbox"/> Negative- I was not as successful as when baiting was legal</p> <p>(5) <input type="checkbox"/> No change- area still baited (illegally)</p> <p>(Note: you will <b>NOT</b> be contacted about this.)</p>
<p>17. Please rate the factors that most influence your perception of a "quality" deer hunt. Enter a value of 1 to 7 next to each statement, with "1" having the most effect and "7" having the least effect on a "quality" hunting experience.</p> <p>_____ An opportunity to kill a deer</p> <p>_____ Seeing deer</p> <p>_____ Seeing bucks</p> <p>_____ Weather</p> <p>_____ Not seeing other hunters</p> <p>_____ Spending time with friends and family</p> <p>_____ Killing a deer</p>	<p>22. Did you submit a deer head for Chronic Wasting Disease testing?</p> <p>(1) <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>(2) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, through the DNR sampling process</p> <p>(3) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, through a purchased kit</p> <p>(4) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, through a veterinarian</p>
<p>18. Did you pass on shooting a legal buck?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes, what factors entered into your decision?</p> <p>(1) <input type="checkbox"/> Too small</p> <p>(2) <input type="checkbox"/> Deer not in a safe direction for shot</p> <p>(3) <input type="checkbox"/> Concerned over deer diseases</p> <p>(4) <input type="checkbox"/> Not allowed to by Earn-a-Buck rules</p> <p>(5) <input type="checkbox"/> Deer not positioned for sure shot</p> <p>(6) <input type="checkbox"/> Did not want more venison</p> <p>(7) <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment malfunction</p>	<p>23. Did your hunting change because of concerns about Chronic Wasting Disease? (Please check <b>ALL</b> that apply.)</p> <p>(1) <input type="checkbox"/> No change</p> <p>(2) <input type="checkbox"/> I hunted less</p> <p>(3) <input type="checkbox"/> I only hunted for large buck</p> <p>(4) <input type="checkbox"/> I was cautious about the deer condition before shooting</p> <p>(5) <input type="checkbox"/> I changed my hunting location</p> <p>(6) <input type="checkbox"/> I do not plan to eat any deer I have shot</p> <p>(7) <input type="checkbox"/> I hunted more</p> <p>(8) <input type="checkbox"/> I shot more deer than normal</p>
	<p>24. Did you kill a coyote in the zone open to coyote hunting during <b>this</b> gun deer season? <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No</span></p>
	<p>25. Did you kill a coyote in the zone open to coyote hunting during the previous five (5) gun deer seasons? <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No</span></p>
	<p>26. Would you kill a coyote in a zone open to coyote hunting during the gun deer season? <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No</span></p>

**Figure 2.** 2002 Gun deer hunter questionnaire (continued).